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Making Milk

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Stipendiatenkolloquium des Herzog-Ernst-Stipendienprogramms

Ruben Verwaal (Groningen): „Making Milk. Breast Pumps and Galactagogues in Enlightenment Europe“

Mittwoch, 26. April 2017 | 17 Uhr | Forschungszentrum Gotha
(Seminarraum im Pagenhaus, Schloss Friedenstein)

Early modern mothers did not like to breast-feed. Many young mothers did not produce enough, suffered from sore nipples, or they wanted to be liberated from this time-consuming practice and fulfil their social and sexual duties. Yet on the basis of medical and chemical studies, physicians were passionately convinced of the benefits of milk and maternal breastfeeding. This paper argues that 18th century physicians developed new strategies to remedy this widespread antipathy against mother's milk. Besides applying

rhetoric in poems and popular how-to books, doctors promoted maternal breastfeeding by developing new galactagogues (drugs that increased lactation) and innovative breast pumps.

Ruben Verwaal is a PhD candidate at the University of Groningen. His research project “Blood, Sweat & Tears” focuses on the role of chemistry of bodily fluids in 18th century medicine and Dutch Enlightenment culture.

